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PEACEMAKING PROGRAM PREPARING TO PROVIDE SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

The Navajo Peacemaker Youth Education and Apprentice Program is preparing for peacemakers to begin providing services in 13 schools across the Navajo Nation in 2012.

In total, 19 peacemakers and 11 peacemaker liaisons are part of the Youth Education and Apprentice Program. They have received training to provide services to students, including training in Navajo traditional counseling, Western counseling and therapy techniques, faith-based counseling techniques, engaging classroom facilitation and Navajo language. They have completed 181 hours of instruction so far and will continue with ongoing training.

The program has also put together curriculum to be used by peacemakers in the schools. The curriculum was written according to standardized procedures and focuses on self-respect and respect for others.

The Navajo Peacemaker Youth Education and Apprentice Program is a four-year project of the Judicial Branch's Peacemaking Program that aims to put peacemakers in schools and communities to help students and their families improve communication and deal with issues such as truancy, school drop-outs, alcoholism and substance abuse, early pregnancy, bullying and harassment.

The Peacemaking Program is currently working on establishing memoranda of agreement with each of the selected schools. Each school will have its own MOA with the program that will take into account its unique needs. The schools include Seba Dalkai School, Tuba City High School, Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Kayenta Community School, Whitehorse High School, Shiprock Career Prep, Wingate High School, Alamo Community School, To'Hajiilee Community School, Pinehill High School, Ganado High School, Pinon High School and Window Rock High School. Seba Dalkai School has already begun making referrals and some students are receiving services.

The Youth Education and Apprentice Program is funded through a tribal youth program grant for \$450,000 from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention to provide truancy intervention and prevention for children ages 11-17. The first year of the four-year project was committed to strategic planning and the second year was devoted to training. The strategic

planning included establishing a mission statement, vision statement and a grant advisory board. The mission statement is “Hoozhoogo Ína –Empowering youth and families to be decision makers and problem solvers using traditional methods.” The vision statement states, “The Navajo Nation will be a stronger, healthier, happier, more culturally centered people for future generations.”

The program has been working with Dr. Larry Emerson, Dr. Mark Sorenson, Charles Stacy, Sylvia Jackson, Raymond Long, the Navajo Nation police department, Navajo Treatment Center, STAR School, Borrego Pass School, Little Singer Elementary School, Chilchinbeto Community School and Shonto Preparatory School to begin implementation of the peacemaking services in schools.

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